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201304Z Mar 02

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	USNW-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	VCE-00	M-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	SSO-00	SS-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/004W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1279
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000731

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO AND AF/S, DRL FOR A/S CRANER, S/WCI FOR
AMBASSADOR PROSPER

NSC FOR AFRICA SR DIR FRAZER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2012
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [MDC](#)
SUBJECT: MDC WILL ONLY TALK TRANSITION

REF: HARARE 721

CLASSIFIED BY JOSEPH G. SULLIVAN FOR REASONS 1.5B/D

1. (C) SUMMARY: THE MDC SHARPLY DEFINED ITS WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN FACILITATED DIALOGUE WITH ZANU-PF AS LIMITED TO A TRANSITIONAL FORMULA TOWARD NEW ELECTIONS AND REJECTED A UNITY GOVERNMENT. THIS PUTS THEM ON A CONFLICTING COURSE WITH ZANU-PF WHICH SEEKS TO FORCE MDC AND THE NATION TO ACCEPT MUGABE'S LEGITIMACY AS PRESIDENT. WE URGE DIRECT AND INDIRECT US EFFORTS TO HIGHLIGHT AND PRESS FOR AN END TO STATE-SPONSORED VIOLENT RETRIBUTION AGAINST OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) MDC MP DAVID COLTART ASKED TO SEE THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER AND THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR THE EVENING OF MARCH 19 TO BRIEF ON RESULTS OF THE MDC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THAT DAY. COLTART SAID THAT THE COMMITTEE WAS UNITED IN OPPOSITION TO MDC PARTICIPATION IN A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT. GRASSROOTS SENTIMENT WAS EXTREMELY STRONG BECAUSE PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WERE BEING BEATEN UP AND KILLED BY ZANU-PF, THE ARMED FORCES AND THE POLICE FOR HAVING SUPPORTED THE MDC. THE REQUIREMENT TO PUBLISH THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF MDC POLLING AGENTS WAS NOW BEING USED AS A WAY TO PERSECUTE AND PUNISH MDC SUPPORTERS. COLTART SAID THAT SHOULD THE MDC LEADERSHIP SEEK TO PARTICIPATE IN A UNITY GOVERNMENT, THEIR FOLLOWERS WOULD REVOLT. MDC ANALYSIS WAS THAT PRESIDENTS MUGABE WAS SEEKING TO BUY TIME BY ENTERING "RECONCILIATION TALKS" IN THE HOPE THAT PRESSURE ON HIM WOULD BE RELIEVED AND HE WOULD GET SOME FOOD, FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND FUEL ASSISTANCE IN RETURN. MDC BELIEVED THAT PRESIDENT MBEKI
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HAD HIS OWN REASONS FOR BUYING TIME TO PUT OFF A CRISIS AND DIMINISH PRESSURE ON SOUTH AFRICA TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS.

3. (C) COLTART SAID THAT MDC WOULD ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS BEING ENCOURAGED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENTS ONLY IF THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

-- THEY WOULD BE HELD UNDER THE MEDIATION OF AN ACCEPTABLE NEUTRAL AFRICAN. THE MDC LATER TOLD THE NIGERIAN HC THAT THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT CHIEF SHONEKAN'S DESIGNATION IN THAT ROLE BECAUSE OF HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE ELECTION RESULT. PRESIDENT OBASSANJO INSTEAD NAMED PROFESSOR ADEDEJE(SPELLING ?), WHO SERVED FOR TEN YEARS AS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA IN ADDIS.)

-- MBEKI AND OBASSANJO MUST COMMIT TO A FINITE, TIME-LIMITED NEGOTIATION.

-- THE GOZ MUST RELEASE ALL MDC SUPPORTERS ARRESTED DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND SUSPEND PROSECUTION OF MDC LEADERS.

-- THE OBJECTIVE OF NEGOTIATIONS IS NOT A UNITY GOVERNMENT, BUT A GOVERNMENT OF TRANSITION FOR NO MORE THAN SIX MONTHS LEADING TO NEW ELECTIONS HELD UNDER UNITED NATIONS OR COMMONWEALTH AUSPICES AND HELD UNDER THE NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR ELECTIONS SET FORTH BY THE SADC-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM. (COLTART, A LAWYER, SAID THAT
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NO CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION WAS NECESSARY SINCE PRESIDENT MUGABE HAD FREQUENTLY DEMONSTRATED THAT HE COULD DECREE ANYTHING HE WISHED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE PARLIAMENT.)

-- MINISTERS IN SUCH A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DIVIDED IN PROPORTION TO THE RESULTS OF THE 2000 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION(ALMOST EVENLY SPLIT) AND EACH SIDE'S MINISTERS SHALL BE CHOSEN BY THEIR OWN PARTY.(THIS TO BLOCK THE ONGOING ZANU-PF EFFORT TO PICK OFF JUNIOR MDC PARLIAMENTARIANS AND ENTICE THEM INTO ZANU-PF.)

14. (C) COLTART SAID THAT THE MDC WOULD SUPPORT THE ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS(ZCTU) CALL FOR A THREE-DAY STAY-AWAY MARCH 20-22 BECAUSE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON THE GOZ. HE SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS AND MASS ACTION NEEDED TO BE MAINTAINED. BUT HE SAID THAT TSVANGIRAI HAD CAUTIONED HIS OWN RADICALS TO AVOID VIOLENCE, WHICH WOULD BE USED TO REPRESS THEM. COLTART NOTED THAT THE NEW PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY ACT SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED "STAY-AWAYS" AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CONFRONTATION WAS HIGH. HE ALSO

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SAID THAT IF PARTICIPATION WAS HIGH, IT MIGHT CONTINUE BEYOND THE THREE DAYS.

15. (C) COLTART ASKED FOR ASSURANCES THAT THE UK AND US
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WERE NOT PUSHING A UNITY GOVERNMENT, BUT TRANSITION TO A NEW ELECTION, ASSURANCES WHICH WE PROVIDED. HE ALSO EXPRESSED EXTREME DISTRUST THAT MUGABE WAS USING TIME-TESTED METHODS OF SEEKING TO CRUSH OR ABSORB THE MDC BY A COMBINATION OF PERSECUTION AND INCORPORATION OF TOKEN MDC ELEMENTS. HE ASKED FOR PRESSURE THROUGH MBEKI AND OBASSANJO IN PARTICULAR FOR AN END TO THE POLICY OF RETRIBUTION AGAINST MDC SUPPORTERS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE UK OR ANOTHER SIGNATORY COUNTRY SURFACE THE POSSIBILITY OF INVOKING THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE. (US IS NOT A SIGNATORY.)

16. COMMENT: ZANU HAS BEEN USING HEAVY PUBLIC PRESSURE DIRECTLY AND THROUGH AFRICAN FRIENDS TO GET THE MDC TO BUY INTO A RECONCILIATION PROCESS WHICH LEGITIMATES MUGABE'S VICTORY AND RELIEVES PRESSURE ON THE GOZ FROM THE BAD ELECTION PROCESS. FORMAL CHARGES AGAINST TSVANGIRAI ON MARCH 20, HARASSMENT AND RETRIBUTION

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AGAINST MDC SUPPORTERS AND HEAVY-HANDED RHETORIC ABOUT THE MDC'S NEED TO BE PATRIOTIC ARE ALL PART OF THAT PRESSURE. THE ALWAYS HEAVY-HANDED INFORMATION

MINISTER JONATHAN MOYO WAS AT IT AGAIN IN A MARCH 20
"HERALD" ARTICLE, SAYING THAT TSVANGIRAI IS SOUNDING
LIKE A CRIMINAL (IN CALLING FOR AN ELECTION RE-RUN)
BENT ON SUBVERTING ZIMBABWE'S CONSTITUTION AND LAWS.
(REF B) THUS, THE AGENDAS FOR ZANU-PF AND THE MDC ARE
RADICALLY DIFFERENT WITH ZANU-PF OFFERING A FEW CRUMBS
AT MOST AND MDC SEEKING A NEW ELECTION. THE NIGERIANS
AND SOUTH AFRICANS PLAN TO BEGIN THE PROCESS ON
THURSDAY, BUT WILL HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY RECONCILING
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THE TWO WILDLY DIFFERENT AGENDAS. END COMMENT.

17. ACTION REQUESTS: 1.) WE RECOMMEND THAT WE DO
EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HIGHLIGHT AND BRING PRESSURE
AGAINST THE GOZ'S CAMPAIGN OF POST-ELECTION REPRESSION,
INCLUDING URGING THE NIGERIANS AND SOUTH AFRICANS TO
BRING PRESSURE ON THE GOZ. 2.) WE ASK WHETHER THE
DEPARTMENT CAN OPEN OR STIMULATE THE OPENING A PUBLIC
INVESTIGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANY ACTS OF
MURDERS, BEATINGS, TORTURE AND RAPE REPORTED IN THE
INTERNATIONAL PRESS AND MANY ELECTION OBSERVER REPORTS
DURING THE PRE- AND NOW POST-ELECTION PERIODS.

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